



Hon. Robert T. Matsui

Member of Congress

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Robert T. Matsui
Serving California's 5th District

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MATSUI JOINS OLDER WOMEN'S LEAGUE TO UNVEIL MOTHER'S DAY REPORT ON PRIVATIZATION

WASHINGTON, DC—Today Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Robert T. Matsui (D-CA) joined the Older Women's League (OWL) as it unveiled its 17th annual Mother's Day report entitled "**Social Security Privatization: A False Promise for Women**" and launched a nationwide campaign in opposition to Social Security privatization.

"Women are making it crystal clear that they want to protect Social Security from privatization proposals that will cut benefits and drain trillions from the trust fund," said Matsui. "I commend the Older Women's League for their excellent report on this critical issue and for calling on Members of Congress to take a stand against Social Security privatization."

The OWL report makes plain what many analysts have long stated: privatization would be devastating for women. On average, women earn less, live longer, and spend less time in the workforce than men. Under privatization, they would have less to deposit into private accounts. They would therefore have to live on smaller benefits from smaller accounts over a longer period of time, without the protection from inflation offered by Social Security. Privatization drains trillions from the Social Security trust fund and would lead to significant benefit cuts across the board. It will also hasten the date when Social Security will no longer be able to pay full benefits by more than a decade.

Matsui also announced today that he is introducing a bill to dramatically improve Social Security benefits for elderly widows. The **Social Security Widows Benefit Guarantee Act of 2002** will expand benefits for 5 million widows, 1 million of whom are currently living in poverty. The bill creates a new "widow's guarantee." Widows would be guaranteed a benefit equal to 75% of the combined benefits the couple had been receiving prior to the death of one spouse. Under current law, widow's benefits are limited to 50-67% of previous combined benefits, often leaving surviving spouses unable to meet their cost of living. The bill also improves benefits for certain groups of elderly, disabled, and divorced women. These provisions will affect approximately 120,000 additional beneficiaries.

"We can and should do more for widows, who are among the poorest of all Social Security beneficiaries," said Matsui. "When an elderly woman's husband passes away, we should stand by her, not penalize her by cutting her Social Security benefits by up to 50%. Widows cannot wait for these improvements. And if Republicans push forward with privatization, we'll be cutting benefits, not improving them. The time for action is now."

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